GUIDE

TO

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

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For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

"WHAT WILT THOU THAT I SHOULD DO UNTO THEE?" MARK X. 51.

I thank thee for thy mercy, Lord,
That stoops to hear a suppliant's cry;
I thank thee for the blissful word
That bids my soul in faith draw nigh.

Humbled in dust, ashamed to rise,
Wondering I ask how can it be,
That my unworthy soul's desires
Should be so freely granted me.

Humbled still more, as truth reveals
The glories of redemption's plan,
And teaches how for Jesus' sake
Such heavenly gifts descend to man.

For *Jesus' sake!* O precious word,
Help me, my Lord, I will believe;
I trust thy word of promise *now*,
I ask, expecting to receive.

I ask but this; this one desire
Fills and expands my panting soul,
That thou, O blessed Lord, wouldst speak
One gracious word and make me whole.

N.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

HOLINESS, NOT NUMBERS, THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH.

A LETTER.

How much the Lord hath prospered you. Well may you exclaim — What hath God wrought! We have observed the notices announcing your continuous prosperity, and, with full hearts have said, Praise the Lord!

Is your little band like Gideon's, chosen of God and humble? If so, you may expect to see greater things than these. Otherwise, though you may increase in numbers, your might will diminish, your glory depart. If numerical strength were the glory of the church, the Catholics have it. If high sounding titles, or worldly splendor, constituted the glory of the church, others have it in preference to ourselves. O let us rather feel that the glory of the church consists in her holiness — her approximation to the image of Christ.

O that lovely image! The church is his spouse! What a dignified position! What a hallowed, inconceivably responsible relation! Not only her beauty, but her power, lies in the *nearness* of her relation, in conformity to the likeness of her Beloved.

If she comes up terrible as an army with banners, it will be by virtue of the *nearness* of her relation to Christ, because she comes up *leaning* upon her Beloved. Otherwise she would be strengthless, though the accumulated force of the universe were given her. But imagine the spouse coming to her Beloved with *divided* affections. She has heard him say, "I am a *jealous* God." She knows that He can perceive her thoughts, and would not the knowledge that his eyes are as a flame of fire, keep her from a *near* approach? From whence then her courage, or *warrant* to confide strongly, or *lean closely* on her Beloved? Her own knowledge of the state of her affections would keep her at a distance. How then can she obtain that confidence which can only emanate from reciprocal love, that power which can only be desired by virtue of leaning upon her Beloved.

No wonder then that we witness religious communities driven to resources for sustainment which seem so questionable. From hence motives of action are appealed to which we cannot assure ourselves are from the Fountain of purity. Springs are set in motion, inciting the energies of her members to form alliances

more calculated to incline to further estrangement than to bring back her affections to God.

Dear sister, have we not witnessed too much of this of late in many religious communities? Are not these festivals, fairs, &c., more than questionable? Is it not too much like calling upon Egypt for help? May not the cold state of many of our churches during the past winter be attributed in part to these worldly alliances? I had nearly called them *unholy* associations, and I leave it to you whether I would not have named them correctly, for I never saw any fruit but what fully authorizes the belief that they are unholy in bearing, however sincerely intentioned.

But we rejoice to hear that you are gaining strength; that your numbers are increasing. If angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, how exultingly must they have lingered over your little Zion, while one after another of these swift-winged messengers have ascended the heavenly hill, bearing tidings of another, and yet another, repenting. And when the repentant sinner has been forgiven, what shouts of triumph must have resounded through the Eternal City. And now, dear sister, have these, who have thus received Christ Jesus, continued to *walk* in him? Has increasing fervor and diligence marked their onward progress? If so we may presume that many ere this are happy travellers in the King's highway. Has their faith been directed to this more elevated ground? Much depends upon an energetic, persevering discharge of duty from those who have been longer in the way. The duty of giving right direction to the minds of those *newly* entered is not properly weighed by the mass of professors. Nursing fathers and mothers in the church are needed. And are not the designs of grace frustrated, when those who have been members of the household of faith long enough to train them for this duty, are so deficient that they need ever to be taking the place of learners? We presume, dear sisters, that you are exerting all your energies, "instant in season and out of season," in assisting your pastor in giving early direction to these young minds, so that they may at once enter upon "the more excellent way."

If you would have a truly prosperous, holy church, much depends upon these youthful disciples being led to the higher walk of the Christian. I speak not from mere calculation. I am not urging an unpractised experiment. A lovely young member of my class experienced religion while at class on Friday evening. On Sabbath she received the ordinance of baptism. I felt liberty in encouraging her to expect the thing signified, that is, the baptism

of the Holy Ghost. She received it in such a powerful manner as never to leave room for a moment's doubt. Another, a beloved relative, experienced religion on Sabbath. On Tuesday she attended a meeting for the relation of experience on the subject of holiness held at our house. After having heard the testimony of several witnesses, she came to me, and said with inexpressible ardor, "O I feel as if I could not rest short of any thing that is my privilege to enjoy. O, I want to be holy!" I assured her that the very desire for it was a sure intimation of God's intention to grant it, if she would only perseveringly look for it. She returned home, wrestled with the angel of the covenant during the night, until about nine o'clock the next morning, when, though in the midst of a heavy storm, she hastened to my house, and greeted me with the words, "O, I thought I must come and tell you that the Lord had sanctified my soul."

Yes, dear sisters, tell these lambs of the flock that the way into the holiest is open; that whosoever will may come. While their minds are pliant, their newly forgiven spirits in the ardor of first love, they will be more easily directed. Yes, they will be more ready to yield to the persuasion that it is in *love* their heavenly Father requires that they should be holy. They will not have learned to make the commandment of God of none effect through the tradition of men. And the command, "Be ye holy," will be apprehended as the voice of God. Do try the experiment, dear sisters, with the many lately born in the fold. O may they "be led into green pastures and beside still waters," their minds be fully possessed, their spirits fully imbued with holiness. After they have partaken of its precious fruits, and fully digested its all renovating principles, the speculations* which have of late been indulged in will be far less likely to affect them. Otherwise how hazardous their condition. Should they get the idea that it is a controverted subject, their sense of obligation would become weakened — faith proportionably crippled — and many chances to one whether they go not halting all their days — divided in opinion, and divided in their affections between God and the world. May God save the little flock at L—— from this state of things. And may he make you, with all that labor in work and doctrine, mighty through the Spirit. Why may not every member worshipping with you be eminent for holiness? Then shall your beloved Zion come up leaning upon her Beloved, and with every day you may expect that she will be gathering fresh strength for the battle. Blessed be God, the most feeble among you may become as David. Should every one become

*That holiness and justification are received at the time of conversion.

thus empowered, how truly would you find that the *power* of the church lies more in the *holiness* of her members than in the *number* of her partizans. "One shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight." Pray, dear sisters, that God may help me to be free from the blood of all men. I greatly desire to be able to say with Paul, I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God.

Yours in the faith of the gospel,

P. P.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

Mr. Editor,—The following narrative of religious experience was placed in my hands, with a view of publication in your excellent Guide, if I thought it suitable. Having abridged it considerably, and re-written a part of it, I forward it to you with the request that it may be published, if you think it will subserve the cause of holiness. The person who wrote it is a member of the M. E. Church in Southampton, a burning and shining light. May the number of such Christians multiply daily.

Yours, &c., M. Dwight.

Williamsburg, Mass., April 30, 1844.

Dear Brother,—Feeling deeply interested in the spread of *Scriptural holiness*, and believing that reading the personal experiences of those who have attained to the state of entire sanctification is an important means of leading those who love the Savior into this "more excellent way," I am constrained, though I do it with great diffidence, to contribute my mite towards this important object.

It is about twenty-one years since I sought and obtained the forgiveness of sins. I soon after connected myself with the Congregational Church, of which I continued a member fifteen years. The first thirteen years of my experience I had but little spiritual enjoyment.

Though it was my settled purpose to attend faithfully to all the outward duties of religion, both public and private, in my highest state of religious attainments I could only say, "O wretched man

that I am!" The church with which I was connected, believing this to be *the most elevated state* of Christian experience, I hoped for nothing better in this life.

About eight years since I was led to embrace the doctrine of *entire* sanctification by a train of circumstances, one of which it may be proper to narrate.

While conversing with an unconverted man respecting his spiritual and eternal interests, he inquired, "Where are the Christians who live in accordance with their covenant obligations?" "You vow," he said, "before God and man, that you will be *holy*, but where is there an individual in the church who keeps his vows?"

These interrogatories led me to carefully examine the covenant to which I had subscribed, in doing which I found that it did in fact enjoin holiness both of heart and life.

A short time subsequent, while praying for holiness, it was suggested, "You are asking for a blessing not attainable in this life." Several weeks elapsed before I could again *even ask* the Lord to cleanse me from *all* sin.

I then commenced searching the Scriptures, with a sincere and earnest desire to be let into *all* truth. The result was a clear and full conviction that entire holiness is commanded and promised in the word of God, and of consequence, attainable in our militant state. About this time I read the life of James B. Taylor, which greatly encouraged me to seek for higher attainments in the divine life. I felt convicted that he enjoyed something that I did not, and under the influence of this conviction, together with the conviction that purity of heart was attainable, I resolved on *earnestly* seeking the priceless blessing; and though I was enabled, through grace, to consecrate *all* to God *for ever*, yet living in the midst of a people who were decidedly opposed to the doctrine of holiness, and who looked upon me as a deluded fanatic, the sacrifice cost me a severe struggle; it seemed like cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye; but thanks be to my heavenly Father, it was not made in vain; faith grasped the precious promises, and appropriated the all-cleansing blood of the Redeemer to my sin-distressed heart, old things at once passed away, and all things became new. It is nearly eight years since I experienced this blessed change, and though I am conscious that many errors and imperfections have marked my course, it has been my steady and unchanged purpose in all things to do the will of God, and many and precious are the memorable seasons which I have enjoyed since that eventful period. I have not however been exempted from trials and

temptations. The enemy has attempted at different times to wrest my shield from me, by suggesting that if I was wholly sanctified I would not have such feelings. At these seasons of temptation I have examined my heart, and seriously inquired if there was any thing I was not willing to give up for Christ's sake, and have then reckoned myself dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God; soon the joyful witness of the Spirit has returned. The predominant desire of my heart is that I may uniformly be adorned with all the graces of the Spirit.

Experience has taught me that holiness has not the least tendency to excite proud or boastful feelings, and that those, and those only, who are fully saved, know what it is to be perfectly humble. Such Christians naturally

> "Sink low down the beautiful valley,
> Where love crowns the meek and the lowly."

In this state of mind we feel for perishing sinners, and are prepared to labor for their salvation. I scarcely *began* to feel for sinners before I entered into this holy rest.

Before concluding this imperfect sketch, I would say to all mothers who may read it, this *great* and *precious* salvation is for you; it is just what you need, and what you must have to be happy, and it is what you may have, without money or price, only seek it with your whole heart, by *faith*, and the prize is yours.

I am a mother, surrounded with the cares, anxieties and perplexities of domestic life; but many times, while my hands are full of labor, and multiplied cares press upon me, my heart is filled with rejoicing, and my mouth with praise.

I will only add, the blessing of holiness has weaned me from the vanities and fashions of the world, and I have long desired to see the daughters of Zion coming up to the holy requirements of the Bible, not only denying themselves of needless ornaments, but also of *costly array* or apparel. It is the inward adorning of a meek and quiet spirit we want, which is in the sight of God of great price.

N. S.

The oldest of Christ's servants must not promise themselves a discharge from their warfare, until death discharge them.

Those that remember God shall certainly be remembered by him.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

EVERY DAY EXPERIENCE.

August 27.—For several weeks past I have realized a decline of those high and joyous emotions I have hitherto enjoyed. Have been somewhat perplexed and tried on this account; have greatly feared that I was losing ground. I have carefully examined my heart and ways, and find that my heart is still wholly the Lord's; my determination is still fixed and unaltered, to live to God. Outwardly, I know not that I have transgressed. I easily resist temptations; am not overcome of evil; find a deep and solid peace at the bottom of my heart, which seems to have no termination. But in regard to those high rapturous emotions, I am withered like grass; being comparatively without feeling. One consolation is left to me in this my weak state; if I love not thee, O my God, I love nothing. No other object has usurped that place in my heart, which is thine, thine alone, thine for ever. Yes, for all coming time, and for eternity I have given myself away unto the Lord my God. I would not retrace one step, nor take back for one moment, the sacrifice I have made of my whole being unto the Lord; it is my highest aim to be wholly his.

31.—Received a few nights since a special token of God's remembrance of me, which greatly cheered and comforted my heart. I returned from church conference depressed, not finding in the breasts of others any response to my own feelings, and under the influence of much that was discouraging committed myself to sleep. I awoke at dead of night, surrounded by God's presence. Surely he had come, or sent some angel visitant to bear up my spirit which was drooping. My reflection was, what can I not do, what can I not bear, sustained by God? One other such angel visit at dead of night, I would here record, two months since; it was light, glory, and blessedness in my soul, which banished all sleep, and kept my eyes waking, and strengthened me for the performance of a cross bearing duty which immediately awaited me, and I knew it not.

Am still often anxious on account of self seeking. I want to feel that I am wholly rid of self, and living purely, simply for God, and to God. I long to be wholly free from all self-entanglements, and live and breathe only for God.

Sept. 23.—Have been called in Providence to spend much of this month in company with others, and have had less opportunity for retirement and prayer than usual. Notwithstanding this, I have realized much of the (and may I not say in truth the *continual?*) presence of God. Surely, I have been kept by the Good Shepherd, and have not passed from beneath his watchful eye. Wherever the Lord calls his children to go, there He will be with them, and surely my prayer has been, "If thy presence go not with

me, carry me not up thence." Have realized something of the feelings expressed by Madam Guion in the verse, —

"To me remains nor place nor time,
My country is in every clime;
I can be calm and free from care
On any shore, since God is there."

But I find it good to be alone again with God. I cannot mingle in the world for enjoyment; duty only calls me from my retirement. I have found short interviews desirable, and all approach to disputation unprofitable. To be a child of God, and speak only when I can glorify Him, requires great simplicity, and in the main, but few words. Have had some trials and sorrows of mind; realized some thing of Paul's experience in the passage, "troubled, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair," &c.

26. — Would record with gratitude to God, that my mind is at rest on a subject which has caused me some anxiety, and which I have often prayed over. While praying, a view of the subject was presented to my mind, which fully settled the question. I bless the Lord, who hears and *answers* prayer. O how much is that childlike confidence in God worth, which approaches Him, expecting to be heard and answered, and to be directed by Him in the path of duty. O Lord, do thou enable me to possess more and more of the simple prayer of childlike faith and trust in Thee.

Oct. 19. — "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles." I record this passage as a memento of my sorrow last evening, for having given too full expression of my views and feelings in private conversation. Have yet much to learn. Be Thou my teacher, my example, who, when reproached, "answered him to never a word."

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

TESTIMONY OF W. P. L.

I had long desired, and for some two months been earnestly seeking a greater conformity to God's will and image; to promote which I quite regularly attended the Allen Street Saturday night meeting, and H.'s Monday evening meeting.

At these meetings I was ever fearful of expressing more than a *desire*, lest I should not exemplify and enjoy what I professed. I had for some time such strong confidence in God's willingness to bless me with his perfect love, and such an unquenchable desire to enjoy it, that I could have believed long before in a present and full salvation through Christ; but (supposing that I

should at the same instant receive an overwhelming manifestation of the Holy Spirit) for a fear that I might not receive that confirmatory evidence of my acceptance in the Beloved which should convince others, and save me from future doubts of the reality of the work wrought in me.

On the 4th of September, at H.'s meeting, the adorable Jesus made such a communication of his love, and such a delightful manifestation of his presence, that "I could hold out no more." I yielded my faith and owned him conqueror. O what condescension and love! I will ever praise God for it. Infinite love and mercy could alone have indulged me with such an inducement to faith, beside all the rest. I had thought I could not believe without it, and the Lord permitted me to receive it.. Notwithstanding, I soon threw away my confidence; how it was possible I can scarcely conceive.

I then thought if God would again constrain me by a similar manifestation, I should not doubt again. Some three weeks afterward, in your Saturday evening meeting, I was again permitted to receive a gracious visitation in the communication of God's loving Spirit. I was exercised in mind about *confessing then* that the "blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin;" but the thought was suggested, "better *wait* and see how you feel afterward," and then, "If the Lord will bless me thus again, I never will doubt more." I was asked at the close of the meeting if I had received the blessing, and I did not confess it!

I was soon led to see that I *must believe*, without another of those manifestations with which God had indeed greatly blessed me twice, or that I might perish everlastingly; for it seemed to me to be so unreasonable *not* to believe "that he who had promised was able also to perform," and that he was willing, and would, and *does* fulfil his gracious promise now.

This passage of Scripture was applied for *conviction*, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent taketh it by force;" and this for *comfort*, "I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee by the right hand of my righteousness; and this for *instruction*, "Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." I was enabled to let go of every thing, and embrace my Savior as my "all in all." I felt that I was blessed in this. I had *peace*, and a conviction that God approved and received me. I *was saved from sin*; it had not dominion over me. I felt a consciousness of purity of motive; I only desired to glorify God. Glory be to his name; it was all of grace through Jesus Christ.

The conversation I had with you and sister L—— was blessed to me. Since then I have not failed to *confess* my blessed Savior before men at all convenient seasons. I have owned his power "to save unto the uttermost," and the virtue of his blood in cleansing from all sin.

Blessed be God, my brother, I have been enabled to live by *faith*, without any exuberance of joy, without a single *signal* baptism of the Holy Ghost, until night before last, when my loving Savior vouchsafed again in a most bountiful degree a manifestation of his love and glory. I felt that I enjoyed for about an hour a nearer approach to my divine Lord and Master than ever before. How shall we be grateful enough for his loving kindness? I want to praise Him more. I want to

> "Sink into the purple flood,
> And rise in all the life of God."

I want that he should "sit as a refiner and purifier of silver" upon my heart, that I may reflect his image in all I do or say.

With regard, &c.,

Your affectionate brother in the Lord,

W. P. L.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

"I AM THE WAY, AND THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE." John xiv. 6.

I found myself a wanderer, a weary, famished wanderer, in a wilderness dark and pathless, without a friend to guard or guide me. My trembling heart inquired in anguish—Where is the way? I am surrounded with dangers; snares are laid for my feet, and thick darkness is above and around me.

The dangers that beset me forbid my tarrying or retreating, and how can I go forward. Again I asked, Where is the way? I thought I heard a voice, a sweet voice, saying, "I am the way." The sound was heavenly, but was it the voice of friend or deceiver. I knew not whether to believe; my weary feet would gladly have ceased their wandering, and followed carefully the perfect way. This path I sought; I knew there was safety in none but this. Again I cried for help. The same sweet voice again said to me, "I am the way and the truth." Could I longer doubt. The truth as well as the way, I repeated. Then, I said, I will believe; and O how light, how safe, my pathway appeared;

holiness was inscribed on all its borders, beautiful guides were constantly pointing upward and onward, and cheering my heart with songs of deliverance. I ran and was not weary; I walked and was not faint. I was satisfied as with marrow and fatness; my cup ran over with blessings, and fulness of joy was my lot. I could ask no more but that this portion should be mine for ever.

Again the voice condescended to assure me, I am the way and the truth; yes, more, I am the life; he that believeth in me shall never die. I give to those that follow me eternal life; depart not from this way—let not the phantoms on either hand allure thee, or the suggestions of enemies induce thee to falter. Should mists or darkness from any cause come over thee, remember there is a bright sun above thee, on which if thou look, they will all be dispersed. Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure through all thy journey; and if thou wilt carefully ponder the path of thy feet, thou wilt find among its dew drops milk and honey.

Should storms threaten thee, all thou hast to do wilt be to run into a strong tower that wilt be ever near thee, and thou wilt be safe; should enemies assail thee, show them thine armor, assure them thou art in the perfect way, and they cannot harm thee.

Study faithfully the chart I have given thee, which never guides astray. As long as thou wilt follow me thou shalt hear my voice, and the desire of thine heart, that this portion should be thine for ever, shall be realized. At the end of the way thou wilt find a crown, and a robe, and an inheritance, and there shalt thou join a great company that no man can number, whose employment it shall be to sing praises unto Him that "sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever." My heart exultingly replied, I know the promised aid is all sufficient. May it be ever so. N.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

THE FOUNDATION OF USEFULNESS.

Very Dear Brother and Sister,—I take the liberty of addressing a few lines to you by our mutual friend and brother.

I have often reflected with great profit on the deeply interesting interview I was permitted to enjoy with you, my dear sister, during your late visit to our city. I was then blest by listening

to your remarks on the great blessing of holiness, and during the great and most powerful revival which has been in progress for more than two months in the Monument Street Church, in which between 300 and 400 have been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, more than 300 of whom have already united with the church. I say, during this revival, which, thank God, is still in progress, my heart has again and again been almost overwhelmed with a sense of the divine presence. At times I have seemed to be swallowed up in God. I think, during the continuance of the morning meetings for the relation of Christian experience, more than thirty gave a clear and full narrative of the reception of the blessing of Christian holiness, all of whom were truly *Wesleyan* in their views and experience. There was a singular uniformity in their relation. A great variety of phraseology was employed, but the great leading points were the same — and why not? All are saved by faith in the same atoning blood, and through the same Eternal Spirit. I regret that my enjoyments of the fulness of the divine favor have not been uniform, yet for many years I have been entirely satisfied from a most blessed experience, that the atoning blood can cleanse from all sin. It is many years since I received the gracious fulness of the Savior's merits. I was about eighteen years old, having then been a member a little more than four years, and a class leader between two and three. I had for some time belonged to a *band*, fasted every Friday, met regularly, and enjoyed much of the divine favor, still often feeling that native defilement which I am fully convinced remains in every heart after justification. It was a season of great spiritual interest. Many were finding peace with God — many the blessing of perfect love. My own soul was constantly thirsting for entire deliverance. I went to a quarterly meeting — witnessed *much* of the power of God — felt much myself — but did not receive the witness of the removal of the native corruption of the heart. Sunday evening went to a prayer meeting in my own class; several were awakened, some converted, and one made perfect in love. My thirst after God greatly increased, but not satiated. I got into the carriage to return home, about six miles, with my brother and wife, and a young lady who was about to spend some time in my brother's family, with whom I was conversing relative to the meeting we had just left. I was saying to her that my soul had been greatly blessed; and while in the act of expressing my obligations of gratitude to God for his abundant blessings, I received a shock which extended throughout the system as though a quantity of ice water had been thrown upon me. This shock was as new as unex-

pected, and I did not know but I was about to be summoned suddenly into the presence of God. I said to the sister by my side, I felt as never before, and did not know what would be the issue, but desired to say to her that my soul was happy in God. Immediately upon saying this I felt another shock of divine power, which at once prostrated me helpless on the floor of the carriage. I remained helpless and nearly speechless till we arrived at my brother's house. I gained a little strength when near home, and my brother and his wife succeeded in getting me into the house, and placing me in an arm chair, where for a moment or two I feebly praised God, when I was again, by the power of God, stricken to the floor. This was about ten o'clock in the evening; and from this time till two o'clock in the morning, I was lost to all below, and completely absorbed in contemplations of the divine glory. My friends who stood by me informed me that I said nothing, except at intervals of about half an hour I repeated the word *eternity* with great solemnity. I then felt that

"Christ was all the world to me,
And all my soul was love."

About two o'clock in the morning I regained my strength. And, being under the influence of

"The speechless awe that dares not move,"

And filled

"With all the silent heaven of love,"

I retired to my bed, but not to sleep, but to lie in the bosom of my all sufficient Savior. I felt as if basking in the presence of God, as if bathing sweetly in the ocean of perfect love. For many weeks, night and day, whenever awake, the same indescribable peace, the same hallowed fulness, continued without abatement. Mine was a cloudless sky. It was not so much *rapture*, as the fulness of the divine favor. I realized that I "dwelt in God, and God in me." My whole soul was calm as the opening morning, and so continued without a moment's interruption for many weeks. I was young and timid, and feared to confess all my feelings and assurances. One of my principal advisers, a man making loud and high professions, was found to be a base hypocrite. This disclosure created a great sensation in the society. The members of our *band* took different sides of the points at issue. I was severely assaulted by the devil, and lost some portion of the hallowed fire which had burned for so long a time with even flame.

I have given you this imperfect narrative of an event which occurred some twenty-four or twenty-five years since, to show you some of my obligations to divine grace, and to indicate that point and that fact in my brief history which are at the foundation of whatever of usefulness or Christian decision have marked my course. I secured an *unction* and power with God then which I had not possessed before, and which, though my life has been too uneven, (alas! alas!) I have never, even for a day, wholly lost. My soul is now solemnly and sweetly fixed on God. I live, my dear friends, in constant hope of meeting you in a better and happier world.

We have been cheered and comforted by the visit of our dear brother, and greatly rejoice at your prosperity. I read sister J.'s letter in the "*Guide*" with great interest and profit.

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And now "may the God of all grace, who has called us unto eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered awhile, make you perfect, establish, and strengthen you." And when the final hour of your departure shall arrive, may you both be able to say, with the Holy Paul, in view of all the *past*, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith, I have finished my course." And in view of the trying hour, may you be ready to say like him, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." And in relation to the future may you ever rest in the assurance, that "henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day; and not to me only, but to all (may it be my portion) who love his appearing." AMEN.

Affectionately yours in the bonds of a perfect gospel,

Baltimore, March 29, 1842. J. S. M.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

THE NARROW AND THE BROADER WAY.

November 23d, 1842, was a day at the remembrance of which my heart overflows with love and gratitude to Him who hath died to purchase salvation for me. I find my heart too contracted to praise him as I would. I can only say, Glory to God; to him alone is glory due. Severe was the contest with the enemy of my soul. He seemed throughout the day to use every effort

to shake my confidence in the Lord, to rob me of that pearl of great price (perfect love) which I had a few weeks previous to this obtained. I was led closely to examine myself, as in the immediate presence of the Lord, and could assuredly say, I bring all, and lay it upon the altar, that altar which sanctifieth the gift. By faith I had obtained the blessing, and in the same way, was I now enabled to retain it, placing implicit confidence in the promises of the great Jehovah. While asking the Lord to give me something by which I should be able to repel the darts of Satan, it was presented to my mind, The trial of your faith is precious. Perhaps, thought I, this is permitted that I may be as gold, prepared for the Master's use. If so, thy will be done. My soul doth rejoice, though in heaviness, through manifold temptation.

I retired to rest with a spirit panting after God, ardently longing for a deeper impress of that seal which proclaims me his; my prayer was, seal me thine for ever. Soon my bodily powers were brought into a state of unconciousness to all outward objects. And I saw a narrow path into which I had just entered; before me at some distance, were a number of individuals, arrayed in *white robes*, while bending over us were the heavenly host, singing, "Who are those arrayed in *white*," when a voice sweeter than the music of angels replied, these are those Thou gavest me. On looking around, I saw one standing by my side, the beauty of whose countenance I can never describe. At the same time, there was presented to my view another path, leading in the same direction, but the travellers in this were of a different character, their appearance was like the worldling; they were travelling at a distance from their Savior. When he who was standing by my side, perceiving my eye was fixed upon them, asked, Would you rather be in company with those, surrounded with the gay, the fashionable, with the honors and pleasures of earth, at a distance from me; or in this path, with me close to thy side? Of what small importance did earth then appear. Had I possessed the gold of India, *gladly*, yea, *most gladly* would I have laid it at His feet. My reply was, For ever here will I remain. And with a smile, (O that smile I shall never forget, and he seemed to press me closer to His side,) he said, Thou art mine, I am thy Savior. I now came so near those that at first were at a distance from me, that I could discern their countenances, several of whom I recognized as professed travellers in the King's highway of holiness. Thinking it strange I was called to travel alone, while they as a company were unitedly journeying onward, I asked why it was: What, said he, do you call yourself

alone when I am so near you? On looking a little before us, I espied a little gate at the end of the path, but before reaching it, it was necessary to pass over a narrow stream of water, and the only crossing place I could see, was formed of dry leaves, and I could see nothing to prevent the leaves falling into the water; fearing to step upon them, I shrank back, when he said, My arm shall sustain you. In a moment we were standing at the gate. On raising my hand to knock, a voice from the other side said, Come in, you need not knock, for you have obtained a right to enter, through faith in the *blood* of the LAMB. As I entered, I saw an individual holding in his hand two crowns, one of which was beautifully decorated with stars, and coming towards the company that had just entered and myself, he selected one from that little company, one who has been instrumental in leading many (the unworthy writer of these lines is one of that number,) to the fountain, where they have washed their *robes*, and holding it over *her* head, presented the other to me, but in this crown there were no stars. Feeling a consciousness of unfaithfulness, I cast my eye downward, when with a tender and gentle expression, He said, be thou faithful unto death, and thou too shall wear a crown of glory.

As I awoke I felt to say, truly my spirit had been holding converse with the spirit world, the cord that bound to earth was severed. The poet expressed my feelings, when he said,

Vain, delusive world, adieu!
With all of creature good,
Only Jesus I pursue,
Who bought me with his blood.

Since that time, the Lord has been gently leading me onward. I do not always equally rejoice, but I can trust against temptations and infirmities. I know I shall have to combat, but truly a crown of glory is worth every effort, to be accounted worthy at last, to be of that happy number, of whom it is said, They have washed their *robes*, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, will more than compensate for every sacrifice.

February 28, 1844. G. E. C.

We may expect the discoveries of the divine grace when we are found in the way of our duty, and are diligent and sincere in our attendance on holy ordinances.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

HOLINESS.

NO. 1.

There is scarcely a doctrine of the Bible, the proper understanding of which is so important as the doctrine of Christian Holiness. If our minds are not clear in the apprehension of its nature and properties, there will ever be an indefiniteness in our attempts to seek or secure it, and our efforts will be fruitless. What human definitions are, is not so important to know as how God has defined it in his revelation. It shall be my object to point out the various acceptations of the word as used in Scripture, and then give a definition of that "without which no man shall see the Lord."

1. Absolute holiness is ascribed only to God, and implies the essential and underived purity of his nature and attributes, including his rectoral justice, whereby he is infinitely removed from sin and all pollution, and becomes the immeasurable fountain from whence flows the holiness of his creatures, whether angels or men.

2. Angelic holiness is the purity and perfection of Cherubim and Seraphim, the attendant and adoring angels of Heaven's lofty temple, and it implies the present and perpetual return of all their powers to God, their Source, through a complete intellectual and moral organization. So far as we have revealed to us of Heaven's government, it appears that the holiness of angels is emphatically a legal holiness, consisting of perfect obedience to the will of God. To this state in the present life we are not required to arrive, for it would be impossible. We lack the perfect organization.

3. Adamic holiness was that state of perfect innocence, physical completeness, and intellectual ability, together with the moral image of their Creator, which Adam and Eve possessed previous to transgression. We may be made into the image of Christ, and rejoice in its power, but in no other respect is Adamic holiness attainable.

4. Relative holiness is applied to men and things, not because they possess the moral quality, but because they are separated from a common to a spiritual use, or dedicated to the worship of God. They are placed in a sanctified relation, and hence are said to be holy. Of this nature were the tabernacle and all its utensils, the temple and its furniture, houses devoted to Christian worship, mountains, cities, and other material things, because

they related to God and his worship. The office of the high priest and of the Christian ministry is said to be holy, but that holiness is a relative holiness. It may be said that these offices were holy because the men who filled them were designed to be holy, and their appointment was for the purpose of promoting holiness. This is admitted, but yet the men who filled these offices in the Jewish and the Christian churches were not always holy. Did their unholiness destroy the purity of the office? or was the office still holy, yet filled by unholy men? If the former, then our present ministers are certainly in a spurious and impure order, for the purity of the office has been long since destroyed by the unholiness of the ministry who have from time to time been called to this work. But if the latter is true, and there can be no doubt, then the holiness of these offices is only relative. The children of Christians are said to be holy in this sense.

5. Ceremonial holiness was applied to those persons who had not legally defiled themselves by a transgression of the ceremonial laws, or had not been contaminated with things and circumstances which rendered the members of the Jewish commonwealth unclean, or having become unclean, they had awaited the period of their separation, offered the appointed sacrifices, performed the necessary ablutions, and been pronounced pure by the officiating priest. We are not liable to these disabilities, and consequently this holiness was confined to the Jews.

6. Comparative holiness is ascribed to families and communities, when their general conduct corresponds, measurably, with God's requirements. Not that every individual is internally pure or outwardly moral, but as a whole or body they are better than the general mass of the wicked. In this sense the children of Israel were called God's holy people. 'Tis true they might be said to be holy because they stood in the relation of chosen worshippers to God, yet when Balaam exclaims, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel," he means that the people were holy. There was *iniquity* in Jacob, and perversity in Israel, yet in comparison with Balak and his people there was none, and hence God called him pure. So the Christian churches are holy, not because every member is so, but because they are so comparatively. They are far better than the great mass of the wicked.

7. Holiness is used in the Scripture in a sense which involves the necessity of a real, radical change in the heart, yet so as not to express the completeness and perfection of the soul in its experience of the Christian graces. As I have not a better term at

hand in which to express this idea, I will call it the holiness of regeneration. Hence the child of God, no matter how young in Christian experience, is said to be holy; for Paul says to the Hebrew Church, "Wherefore, *holy* brethren," among whom doubtless are included the young in experience as well as the old. Now these are said to be holy, not because they are necessarily perfected in the Christian graces, but because they possessed the seeds of holiness, yea, the incipient plants of all purity in the work of regeneration. God, by the operations of his Holy Spirit, changes our vile nature, immediately consequent upon the gracious act which justifies us, and then formally adopts us as his children by the Spirit's witness, "sent forth into our hearts, whereby we cry Abba, Father." We are therefore relatively holy, and by regeneration intrinsically so, but not perfectly.

This last point needs proof. Let the following argument be considered and candidly weighed. Paul says, 2 Cor. vii. 1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." This epistle was written to "the church of God at Corinth, and to all the saints" or holy ones "in Achaia." The first epistle is addressed to the same "church of God," "to them that are *in Christ*, called to be saints," or holy ones. These in this verse are called "dearly beloved." These terms are sufficient to attest the certainty and reality of their Christian experience. Still these "brethren beloved," these "saints," or holy ones are exhorted, in view of the "exceeding great and precious promises" which God had given them, "to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." How could they cleanse themselves from what had no dwelling in either flesh or spirit? for, if upon their regeneration they were made completely holy, how could there be yet filthiness either in flesh or spirit? But they were in Christ regenerate, yet impure; therefore they were only *regenerately* holy, but not completely so. They are exhorted further "to perfect holiness in the fear of God." This implies that they had some holiness, but not perfect holiness. To perfect it they must cleanse themselves from all defilements. If it were already perfect, what does Paul mean by calling upon them to complete it? If incomplete, as is indirectly asserted, then they might be "beloved brethren," "God's people," "saints" or holy ones, and not be perfectly holy. If it be said that they were completely holy at regeneration, but had contracted defilement or filthiness by neglect of duty, it does not help the matter. For then backsliders may be "in Christ," "brethren beloved," and "saints," or holy ones, and recognized

as the true "church of God." If at any time in their lives they may posses "filthiness of the flesh and spirit," and yet retain their character as God's people, what evidence have we, that from the very commencement of their Christian course, they have not been thus defiled? If in later stages of Christian experience we retain our standing as children of God, with a deep sense of inbred sin pervading our hearts, and are conscious that there is much of the remains of the carnal mind within, as almost every Christian does, surely then these things may exist in the first stages of our Christian course, when our pious hearts are all unformed, and our state like helpless infancy. The conclusion is that regeneration is not perfection. Nevertheless the Scriptures represent even the regenerate as holy, that is, they are intrinsically holy in having all its plants in their incipient state, though many of the weeds of inbred sin remain; comparatively holy in their reformation, and relatively holy in their adoption. To say, therefore, that when God regenerates the soul, he frees it from *all sin*, is to speak contrary to the Scriptures.

8. There is yet another state of experience of which I would speak before I come to the last, or the highest state of gospel privilege to which we can aspire in the present life. For the sake of distinction I will call it progressive holiness. In fact experimental holiness in all its states is progressive. It does not differ therefore in its essential quality from perfection in holiness, but it is less in degree. Sanctification commences with regeneration, and is progressive until the soul emerges into the full and perfect liberty of God's completely holy people. The progress of the soul afterward is that of the *wholly* pure. From the moment we become children of God, we are to go forward, "dying indeed unto sin." "We are to lay aside the easily besetting sin, and every weight" or hindrance, and "run with patience the race set before us." We are commanded to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord." We are required to add to our faith, virtue, "and every other grace of the Spirit." By faith we are constituted children of God. (Jno. i. 12.) Being then by faith brought into a state of regenerate holiness, these "additions," "growth" and "running," enjoin progression in holiness. Sanctification is not retained unless we are constantly progressing in experience and knowledge, nor is there the hope or prospect of that usefulness and victory which we should experience if faithful.

9. Another and the last definition which I shall give of the term is that high sense in which it is most frequently used both in the Scriptures and by God's people—the holiness of entire

sanctification. Its experience is not only progressive, as shown above, but it is also *instantaneous*. "The Lord" whom we "seek shall suddenly come to the temple" of the heart, and, by the brightness of his coming, consume the remnant of his enemies there, and "sit like refiner's fire, or a purifier of silver," separating the precious from the vile, burning the dross, and making the precious of approved value, according to the balances of the sanctuary. This is the mark for the prize, toward which the babe in Christ is to approximate, and the young man and father in experience are to enjoy, and its beauties exemply in life and conversation.

The holiness of entire sanctification may be exhibited under two ideas.

First, negative holiness, and second, positive holiness. The first is only another name for complete sanctification, and implies the entire removal from the heart and life of every feeling, trait, disposition, word and act which is opposed to God or his government. It includes the destruction of all the carnal mind, of pride, envy, impatience, fretfulness, hatred, variance, strife, contention, revenge, uncharitableness, licentiousness, affectation, censoriousness, injustice, covetousness, love of the world, selfishness, dishonesty, insincerity, pernicious conversation, tale-bearing, slander, deceit, mischief-making, lightness, vanity, idleness and self-indulgence. What a catalogue! What a cage of unclean birds! But "the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin." Its efficacious application by the Almighty Spirit of grace will remove the unclean and defiled birds, will wash the heart from all its internal stains. This is negative holiness.

Second. Positive holiness is the implantation of all the graces of the Spirit in their fulness and perfection in the heart, and the complete and thorough government of the powers, emotions, susceptibilities, motives, passions, thoughts, words and acts by them. It is the fulness of the indwelling Deity, the God of love filling the whole soul, and a conscious sense of his all-pervading power within, without, asleep, awake, at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances. It is an ever present *faith* which surmounts every difficulty, resists all allurements, and overcomes all besetments; on whose broad, impenetrable shield all the fiery darts of our adversaries are quenched, and behind which the heart is covered in the day of battle. It is a *hope* all-sustaining, firm, sure, steadfast, and "cast within the veil," whose "*full assurance*" supports and comforts amid the darkness of adversity's dismal night, or the rage of the fierce storms and tempests of affliction and bereavement. It is a *love* intense and *perfect*, whose

pervading power engrosses the whole "heart, soul, mind and strength, quenchless (except by sin) as the eternal fire which burns imperishable upon heaven's holy altar, a living coal of which, when laid upon his praying lips, Isaiah felt the saving and powerful efficacy, pure as the etherial palace of the mighty King of kings, and glorious as the peaceful hour when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

It is a *peace* which fills the mind with perfect gratitude, like a river whose waters are ever flowing — perpetually increasing, and always fertilizing; calm, placid, powerful — God's own gift and legacy to the believing and obeying children of his adoption. It is a *patience* whose "perfect work" makes us "entire, wanting nothing;" a *meekness* whose quiet demeanor disarms the opposing adversary, and forgives the injuries of the persecuting; a *contentment* which murmurs not, or repines at the allotments of a superintending Providence, but *thankfully* takes the cup prepared and presented by One who is too good to be unkind, and quietly drinks the mingled portion, though bitter to the taste; a *sincerity* which evinces an open-heartedness and ingenuousness at once lovely and perfect; a *simplicity* which completely transforms us into artless and confiding children of a glorious and truth-loving Savior, imparting a lamb-like nature and a truthful heart; a *humility* which lays us low at the feet of sovereign mercy, conscious of what we are, and what that mercy has accomplished for us, stripping us entirely of every thing gay, showy, costly, or inappropriate in dress, furniture, equipage, or food, inducing a plainness, neatness, frugality and self-denial which should ever characterize beings whose work is so vast, and whose responsibilities are so great. This would bring us near to God, would make our hearts his abode, "For," saith he, "I dwell with the humble and contrite to revive their hearts." It is a *chastity* pure, exalted and perfect; a *benevolence* wide as the world in which we live; a sense of *justice*, and an *honesty* which secure to all their dues, and equal rights and privileges; a *conversation* which excludes the loved topics of the carnal heart, loving to dwell on the delights of the heavenly world, and the preparation for its pure and gracious instruction; and a *life* holy, harmless, spotless, undefiled, unblamable and unreprovable, being "perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect." This is positive holiness. Even this state of grace is susceptible of a constant increase as the heart grows and expands, so that through time and through eternity the soul will be aspiring. How to attain it shall be the subject of a future theme.

Barnstable, March 12, 1844. GEORGE W. STEARNS.

SCRIPTURE SONNETS.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"I am the good Shepherd, I know my sheep and am known of mine."—*John* x. 14

When o'er the mountains blue the clouds arise,
Charged thick with lightning, and with hail and rain,
The Shepherd, with his flocks upon the plain,
Looks upward, and observes the threatening skies,
And hastes and calls his lambs. He sees them roam
Some on the cliffs, some by the gentle brook,
Unconscious of their danger. With his crook
And chiding voice, he brings them safely home,
And pens them in the fold. Our Savior too
Is keeper of a flock, a precious flock,
Purchased by his own blood. To pastures new
He leads them; and beneath the shadowy rock
Protects them from the sun. When beat the storms,
He folds them in his arms, and "in his bosom warms."

THE CHURCH.

"Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined".—*Ps.* 1, 3. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people."—1 *Peter* ii. 9

Whate'er in earth the ravished eye beholds,
Whate'er of beauty in the burnished sky,
It all the great Creator's power unfolds,
His truth, his wisdom, his benignity.
There stand they, stamped by an immortal hand,
In characters as bright as yonder sun;
Revealed, and known, and read by every land,
Long as that burning orb its course shall run.
But more his beauty from his Zion shines;
Far more his glory from his church is known;
Inscribed on holy hearts, in brighter lines,
With brighter beams, in holy actions shown.
Ye are his Temple; built and bought for him;
O, then, let not its light, its holy light grow dim.

Domestic and Religious Offering.